

## Are Video Games Corrupting My Son's Values?

By Jerry Jaehark Yang

My son Sam is 10 years old, and like other fourth graders, he loves playing video games, such as *Minecraft*, *Clash of Clans*, and *Overwatch*. Before we came to the U.S., he used to go outside and play with his friends after school. He enjoyed shopping at convenience stores and having a snack of Korean traditional fast foods, like *kimbab* and *topokki*. There were lots of these stores near our house in Seoul, Korea, and it was easy and safe for a young boy to go outside by himself.

When my family and I came to California last fall, Sam felt often bored. He had to spend most of his time at home, and even though he was good at making friends, he couldn't play with them after school without their parent's care and permission. Therefore, he asked me to let him play video games at home. I wanted him to have a way to relax and feel less stressed while he was adjusting to the new environment, so I agreed, and he began playing video games at home after school.

Last Friday, Sam began talking about luxurious cars.

"Which one is the best among Bugatti, Maserati, and Lamborghini?" he asked me.

I wondered how he knew them and why he was asking me about them.

"Sam, why are you asking me?"

"Dad! I'd like to buy the best one with my game money."

"How will you get your money?" I asked, wondering what he was talking about.

"Dad! I'm a robber in the game," he told me. "And I've stolen luxurious stuff like jewels, cars, and bikes to gain my money. I've tried to gain lots of money. This game is called *Jail Break*."

I was shocked! I began to think that this game was dangerous, not educational at all. It was changing his values. I didn't want him to develop bad values, but I couldn't tell him to stop playing the game right away. He was so involved in it and was really enjoying it. What could I do for him? How could I change his interests from one thing to another? How could I teach him good values?

During the weekend, I thought about what to do. I talked with my wife, called my friends, searched for advice online, and read some books for solutions. My wife advised me to spend more time with him, but I didn't have enough time or energy to play with him as if I was a teenage boy.

One Korean friend told me that I had to set a limit to the amount of time that he plays video games each day. I agreed with my friend, but I did not know what I could do if Sam intended to cheat me. Another friend from my church suggested that I should ask him to read the Bible every day. How could I ask Sam to do this? I didn't read the Bible every day myself either! An online specialist said I should help him find another fun hobby. I thought this was a good idea, but how could I help him find a hobby? Would another hobby really teach him good values? How could I teach him good values? What should he do to learn good values? Who could do all these difficult jobs?

Suddenly, I realized I was the only man who could do all of these things. I was his father, so I knew his character and how to control him because he resembled me. I would know what he would like to do, too. I realized that the truth was that I was usually tired and busy and had stopped paying attention to his behavior.

I might have thought my wife was doing well with him and everything was fine, but in fact, it wasn't. My turn had come. I needed to become a good friend to him. I needed to become a good teacher for him. I decided that I would try to spend more time talking with him. I would try to learn more ways to play and teach him.

I had not been good at doing these things, but I needed to try because Sam is my lovely son. It was time for me to be a good father.

